



By the King.



A We haue euer from our infantie had manifold proofes of Gods great goodnes towards vs in his protecting of vs from many dangers of our Person, very neerely threating vs, and none more notozious then his happy conducting of vs in the late case of our succession to this Crowne, which contrary to most mens expectation wee haue receiued with more quiet and concurrence of good Will of our people (otherwise perhaps of different dispositions) then euer in like accident hath bene seene: So doe we thinke that the memory of his benefits ought to be a continuall solicitation to vs to shewe our selues thankfull to his diuine Maiestie, wherein soeuer opportunitie shall be offered vs to doe him service, but especially in things concerning his honour and service, and the furtherance of the Gospel, which is the ducty most bebecoming Royall authoritie. Wherefore after our entry into this Kingdome, when wee had receiued information of the state thereof at the decease of the Queene our Sister of famous memory, Although we found the whole Body thereof in generall by the wisdom of her selfe and care of those who had the administration thereof vnder her, in such good state of health as did greatly commend their wisdomes, as well in the Politique part of it, as also in the Ecclesiasticall, whereof since wee haue vnderstood the forme and frame, we are perswaded that both the constitution and doctrine thereof is agreeable to Gods Word, and neere to the condition of the Primitive Church: Yet forasmuch as experience doeth shewe dayly, that the Church militant is neuer so well constituted in any forme of Policie, but that the imperfections of men who haue the exercise thereof, doe with time, though vnsensibly, bring in some corruptions: As also for that informations were daily brought vnto vs by diuers, that some things vsed in this Church were both scandalous to many seeming zealous, and gaue aduantage to the Aduersaries, wee conceiued that no subject could be so fit for vs to shew our thankfulness to God, as vpon serious examination of the state of this Church, to redeeme it from such scandales, as both by the one side and the other were layd vpon it. For our instruction wherein, we appointed a meeting to be had before our Selfe and our Counsell, of diuers of the Bishops and other learned men, the first day of the next moneth, by whose information and aduice we might gouerne our proceeding therein, if we found cause of amendment. But by reason of the sickness reigning in many places of our Kingdome, the vnseasonable time of the yeere for trauaile, and the incommoditie of the place of our abode for such an assembly, we were constrained to deferre it till after Christmas: At which Consultation we shall both more particularly vnderstand the state of the Church, and receiue thereby light to iudge whether there be indeed any such enormities as are pretended,

and know how to proceed to the redresse. But this our godly purpose we finde hath bene misconstrued by some mens spirits, whose heat tendeth rather to combustion then reformation, as appeareth by the courses they haue taken, Some vsing publique Inuectiues against the state Ecclesiasticall here established, some contemning their Authoritie and the Processes of their Courts, some gathering subscriptions of multitudes of vulgar persons to Supplications to be exhibited to vs to craue that Reformation, which if there be cause to make, is more in our heart then in theirs. All which courses it is apparant to all men are vnlawfull and doe saunour of tumult, sedition, and violence, and not of such a Christian modestie as becometh those, who for pieties sake onely desire redresse of things they thinke to be amisse, and cannot but be the occasions of dissention partialities, and perhaps of greater inconueniences among our people.

For preventing whereof, we haue thought it necessary to make publique declaration to all our Subjects, that as we haue reason to thinke the estate of the Church here established, and the degrees and orders of Ministers governing the same, to be agreeable to the worde of God, and the forme of the Primitive Church, hauing found the same blessed in the reigne of the late Queene, with great increase of the Gospel, and with a most happy and long peace in the politique State, which two things, the true seruice of God, and happinesse of the State doe commonly concur together: So are we not ignorant, that time may haue brought in some Corruptions, which may deserue a renew and amendment, which if by the assembly intended by vs we shall finde to be so in deepe, we will therein proceede according to the Lawes and Customes of this Realme by aduise of our Councell, or in our high Court of Parliament, or by Conuocation of our Clergie, as we shall finde reason to leade vs; not doubting but that in such an orderly proceeding, we shall haue the Prelates and others of our Clergie no lesse willing, and farre more able to affoord vs their ductie and seruice, then any other whose zeale goeth so fast before their discretion. Upon which our Princely care, our pleasure is, that all our Subjects doe repose themselves, and leaue to our conscience that which to vs only appertaineth, auoyding all vnlawfull and factious manner of proceeding, for that hereafter if any shall either by gathering the subscriptions of multitudes to Supplications, by contempners behauiour to any authoritie by the Lawes resting in Ecclesiasticall persons, by open inuectiues and vndecent speeches either in the Pulpit or other wise, or by disobedience to the processes proceeding from their Iurisdiction, giue vs cause to thinke that he hath a more vnquiet spirit then becometh any private person to haue toward publike authority, we wil make it appeare by their chastisement, how farre such a maner of proceeding is displeasing to vs, and that we finde that these Reformers vnder pretended zeale affect Noueltie, and so confusion in all estates: whereas our purpose and resolution euer was, and now is to preserve the estate aswell Ecclesiasticall as Politique, in such forme as we haue found it established by the Lawes here, reforming onely the abuses which we shall apparantly finde prooued, And that also to doe by such mature aduise and deliberation, as we haue aboue mentioned. Wherefore we admonish all men hereby to take warning, as they will answere the contrary at their perill.

Giuen vnder our hand at Wilton the twenty fourth day of October 1603. of our Reigne of England, France and Ireland the first, and of Scotland the thirti and seuenth yere.

God saue the King.

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